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BOOK REVIEWS.

ROUSSEAU AND ROMANTICISM. By Irving Babbitt. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1919. Pp. xxiii, 426. Price, \$3.50.

It is to the ethics of Rousseau and romanticism that Professor Babbitt devotes himself. And his primary concern is not with the ethics of a past movement, but with a philosophy of life which the author believes to be dominant. Rousseau and romanticism stand for naturalism; more specifically, for emotionalistic naturalism as distinguished from scientific and utilitarian naturalism, with which, however, the author believes emotionalistic naturalism to be closely connected. On its positive side Professor Babbitt defines his position as that of an ethical positivist and individualist, in that he rejects authority and tradition. His criterion is affirmed to be that of "fruits," and in particular the fruit of happiness, but the criterion most in evidence in the actual discussion is that of "decorum." As historical representatives of his position or one closely allied to it he names Confucius, Buddha and Aristotle. He aims his attack against such modern writers as Bergson, James, Dewey, Croce, and "smart young radicals" who favor novelty—the Many rather than the One—although he has no admiration for "the new realists, flat on their faces before the man of science."

Rather strangely for one who proclaims himself a positivist, the author accepts the distinction between appearance and reality and identifies the real with the one, the illusory with the many and with change. But he holds that the problem of the one and the many can be solved only by a right use of illusion. "There is always the unity at the heart of the change; it is possible, however, to get at this real and abiding element and so at the standards with reference to which the dream of life may be rightly managed only through a veil of illusion." The problem of conduct is to be solved "only by a deeper insight into the imagination and its all important road in both literature and life." And what is this function of imagination that is to make life whole? "Man is cut off from immediate contact with anything abiding and, therefore, worthy to be called real, and condemned

to live in an element of fiction or illusion, but he may, I have tried to show, lay hold with the aid of the imagination on the element of oneness that is inexplicably blended with the manifoldness and change and to just that extent may build up a sound model for imitation." The noteworthy thing in this philosophy of life is, therefore, the quest for unity as contrasted with variety or change.

Practically applied, this moral ideal means chiefly a control of impulse, repression rather than expression. Favorite phrases are, "pulling back of impulse," "the veto power in man." The morality of decorum is to be found in "the habits that make for moderation and good sense and decency." The moral law condemns not merely the lust for power, but humanitarianism as well. "That the brutal imperialist who brooks no obstacle to his lust for dominion has been tampering with this law goes without saying; but the humanitarian, all adrip with brotherhood and profoundly convinced of the loveliness of his own soul, has been tampering with it also and in a more dangerous way, for the very reason that it is less obvious." The leading topics under which the author's criticism of the romantic philosophy of life is pursued are: Romantic Genius, Romantic Imagination, Romantic Morality, Romantic Love, Romantic Irony, Romanticism and Nature, Romantic Melancholy, and The Present Outlook. The method of treatment is that of the essay rather than that of logical analysis.

Broadly speaking, if we neglect technicalities and look to the content of the moral ideal, we may well divide moral theories with Nietzsche into those which say Yes to life and those which say No. Undoubtedly romanticism says Yes. Professor Babbitt is fair enough to point out that its emphatic Yes was due in part to the narrow and harsh order of society and law of life which it found in possession of the field. Undoubtedly its conception of the beautiful soul lent itself easily to exaggerated individualism. Undoubtedly the love of the sexes, which directly or indirectly played so large a part in the romantic literature, is a dangerous human passion, even though it has all the potency for suffusing life and thought with subtle interest which Plato suggested in his doctrine of the Eros and which makes the novel the art of most universal appeal to-day. It is desirable to have the full scope of this attitude toward life presented for consideration, although no advocate of this philosophy would consider Professor Babbitt's

presentation a comprehensive and all-sided one. Yet one is inevitably moved to ask whether the proper measure to be found for an indiscriminating Yes is a simple No. Granted that life cannot be lived on the purely naturalistic level, in which every emotion and passion is welcomed and expressed without limit, does it follow that "decorum" is the most effective watch-word with which to find real values, or that "unity" represents a large enough meaning to satisfy the human spirit?

To state the moral situation in another way, do we understand Rousseau and the great movement of which he was a part if we look at them purely in psychological terms of feeling and emotion versus reason? We deceive ourselves if we fail to consider them as rather part of a great democratic process. Order may for the philosopher be conceived as a numerical or logical symbol, but as an ethical power it usually means the control of a ruling class. In the age of the French Revolution laws of every kind had a flavor of rules imposed by military, political, ecclesiastical and social authorities. If our democracy to-day is prone to excesses, can we meet the situation by ignoring all social problems? There is no suggestion in Professor Babbitt's treatment that human nature gains its ethical world, in part at least, through the give and take of common struggles, common joys, and mutual help. Class consciousness is undoubtedly responsible for many of the harsh and unlovely traits of human character. Nevertheless it is so fundamental that it is not likely to be transformed by the mere ideal of unity, however persuasively presented. A theory of education which relies purely upon the humanistic ideal in this narrow sense of the term may appeal to the imagination of a gifted few, but it is not likely to "produce leaders." For a leader must not merely imagine a goal; he must have power with his fellows.

Professor Babbitt has half-opened a window. He wishes to oppose naturalism as a philosophy of life. He sees that ethical civilization means not accepting "what is," whether in external nature or in inner emotions, as a final criterion for conduct. The moral standard must be sought in a moral ideal, and this ideal must be constructed through imagination. Well and good. But having cast out naturalism, he turns and opens the door wide for its metaphysical counterpart, which is equally unavailable for ethics. Instead of seeking what is "good" with an eye single to the problem of values, he allows himself to be caught by

the ancient confusion between the "real" and the "good." He identifies the real with the "One," the "abiding." This is the more surprising as he lays down the sound premise: "It [life] gives a oneness that is always changing. The oneness and the change are inseparable." From this premise we might expect the inference that oneness and change are equally real and equally essential to life. And if one looks to the realm of art, one finds that the great artists never separate these factors. But Professor Babbitt goes on to the remarkable inference that the change is illusion, the oneness real. In the passage already quoted, he asserts: "Man is cut off from immediate contact with anything abiding and therefore worthy to be called real." He finds the only sound model for imitation to be "the element of oneness."

Why, if one is seeking the real, should the abiding be regarded as more real than the change that is inseparable from it? And why if one is seeking a value (good), should he decide upon this by asking what is real? Are not some "real" things evil? And finally, if, as I think is profoundly true, the imagination has an indispensable function in forming ethical standards, why limit it to the one path of finding unity and assume that whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil? If man had never imagined anything other than unity, the world might have had law of a certain sort but it would surely have had no prophets and no gospel. It would have had no Plato's "Republic." And, to take one of Professor Babbitt's favorite poets, it would have had no "Antigone." For the passionate appeal of Antigone to a "higher law" is no logician's quest for a unity which is its own sufficient reason; the real reason why Antigone buries her brother is that the tie of kin is superior to that of political allegiance. The law is used to lend sanction to the imperious demand of the heart.

It is of course futile to set up the claims of either emotion or reason to be the sole guide of life; and one may adopt, though with a somewhat different implication from that intended by the author, his plea that our modern experiment has not been sufficiently modern in the sense that it has not yet followed out fully the implications of a moral world which cannot rely upon sanctions of past authority and tradition. Professor Babbitt criticizes the uncritical giving place to emotion; it is equally necessary to criticize, as Professor Babbitt does not, the uncritical insistence

upon "reason" and unity. The law which will ultimately reign in the moral world, the world of genuine freedom, must be the law of life. And life means change as truly as it means the abiding.

J. H. TUFTS.

GREEK POLITICAL THEORY: Plato and his Predecessors. By Ernest Barker, M.A. London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1918. Pp. xiv, 403. Price, 14s. net.

Mr. Barker's fresh and valuable study of Greek political theory up to and including Plato is the first volume of a reconstruction of his earlier work, *The Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle* (1906), a reconstruction so thorough and fearless that it cannot be looked upon as a new and enlarged edition. The second volume, *Aristotle and His Successors*, will be written "as soon as the position of national affairs justifies the author in undertaking such work." The present study, which thus entirely supersedes his earlier book is both an analysis and mature appraisal of every Greek political thinker of whom we have any distinct record, up to and including Plato, to whom as the greatest of these thinkers, the major portion of the book, chapters vi to xvii, are devoted. An interesting feature in the book is the translation of two newly discovered fragments of the Sophist Antiphon *On Truth* (p. 83), in which he maintains that "justice consists in not transgressing (or rather, in not being known to transgress) any of the legal rules of the state in which one lives as a citizen. A man, therefore, would practise justice in the way most advantageous to himself if, in the presence of witnesses, he held the laws in high esteem, but, in the absence of witnesses, and when he was by himself, he held in high esteem the rules of nature. The reason is that the rules of the laws are adventitious, while the rules of nature are inevitable."

The book is essentially both in matter and arrangement written for students, but apart from the chapters upon the Greek state, and the political theory of the sophists and the minor Socratics, the study of Plato has a wider appeal. Plato has come to mean more to us and to the author, on many points, than he would have meant if the war had not stirred the deeps; and the issue of might against right (pp. 71-74) as set out by Callicles in the *Gorgias*, the significance of militarism (pp. 298-301) as